

## GNATHIUM MINIMUM (SAY) IN ILLINOIS (COLEOPTERA: MELOIDAE)

By JOHN K. BOUSEMAN<sup>1, 2</sup>

On August 11 and 12, 1962, while collecting in an area of sand-prairie along the Mississippi River three miles south of Savanna, Illinois, I found many adults of *Gnathium minimum* (Say) on flowers of *Helianthus*. Most of the beetles were on flowers of *Helianthus petiolaris*, but a few were on *H. occidentalis* and *H. rigidus*. Seventy-three specimens were collected on the two days. On August 19, 1962, I returned to the sand-prairie and found *G. minimum* on *H. petiolaris* three miles north of Fulton, Illinois. At this locality egg masses of the beetle were present on *H. petiolaris*. Females oviposit at the base of the bracts of the host plant. Two egg masses from the bracts of a single flower yielded a total of 290 larvae. Six egg masses deposited in the laboratory by caged females hatched in six or seven days.

MacSwain (1952, Wasmann Jour. Biol. 10:205-224) has summarized the known distributions of the species of *Gnathium* occurring in the United States. My records of *G. minimum* are of especial interest as they are not only the first for *Gnathium* in Illinois, but are also new northeastern limit records for the genus. Further, they are the first records at this latitude for *G. minimum* east of Nebraska.

*Gnathium minimum* is probably a member of that group of insects which find their easternmost distributional limits in the xeric sand-prairies of western Illinois. It is of interest to note that *Helianthus petiolaris* is believed to be adventive in Illinois from the western United States (Jones, 1963, Amer. Midland Natur. Monogr. No. 7:1-401). *G. minimum* might also be a recent migrant to the state.

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### BEETLE TALK

The G. H. Dieke collection of beetles and entomological library was acquired by the U. S. National Museum in 1965. Dieke was chairman of the Physics Department of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. His special entomological interest was the Coccinellidae, and the collection is especially rich in specimens (about 14,000) of that family. Furthermore, the predominance is in the Epilachninae, Dieke's favorites.

A large part of the synoptic collection of Anastase Alfieri was acquired by the U. S. National Museum in 1966. Alfieri, of Cairo, is Secretary General of Société Entomologique d'Égypte. The collection contains Coleoptera, Hymenoptera, Neuroptera, and a smattering of other orders. It is not a huge collection, consisting of a few specimens of many species, but all are identified, some being type material, and all are from Egypt or nearby. The Coleoptera are most numerous, with 3805 specimens of 1929 species.